

ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK
CHANCERY OFFICE
THIRTY-ONE MULBERRY STREET
NEWARK, NEW JERSEY 07102

OFFICE OF THE TRIBUNAL

NO.

August 4th, 1967.

Dear Fellow Commissioners;

I am unable to attend the August meeting, but I am anxious that there be placed before you my views on the subjects discussed at the two previous meetings which I attended.

In the matter of a replacement for Mr. Romano which is being capably handled by Commissioner Porcellii, I should like to say that I thought that Mr. Romano was qualified and capable. The City should have offered him a higher salary to stay on the job. He had just begun to make his presence felt in a beneficial manner. It is at least short-sighted to allow him to be removed from our midst in the present impasse. May I suggest an emergency appeal to the Mayor's office and to the City Council to recall Mr. Romano with a more attractive salary offer. Whatever other action is taken in reference to obtaining a replacement will cause much delay, with which our Commission is familiar in similar matters. Again, the probability of improving our situation in the area of an Assistant Director is very remote in the present circumstances.

*Memo
Colburn*

The other matter mentioned by our Chairman, Mr. Black, at a meeting which took place during the recent riots and which concerns the attitude of the Commission toward the Police, is one which must be treated with considerable circumspection. Rioters are people lacking hope, and people who have reached the core of their frustration. On the other hand, they, as well as the great majority who are not rioters, regardless of color, need and have a right to Police protection. To continue or further develop a diatribe for public consumption against the Police, can only lead to inciting further rioting on the one hand, and to further hardening of the attitude of the Police toward the rioters, on the other.

I disagree with the statement attributed to our Chairman in the press that work done by the Police in their community relations programs has been rendered useless by the riots. It was not the rioters who met with the Police

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during the conducting of these programs. The people who met with the Police, as well as the Police themselves, were in most part honestly seeking mutual understanding and help through communication. Neither these people or the Police are going to hate one another because of the riots. From a positive view, it would certainly be more to the credit of a Commission concerned with Human Rights to consider the idea that the riots accentuated the need for much more mutual communication between Police and people, than to infer that the efforts made have been a failure, and in consequence abandoned.

May I burden the Commission with my own ideas on the genesis of the Newark riots? I have lived and worked in the midst of the riot area for twenty-two years. My interests are entirely spiritual, though I am abundantly aware of the need to supply material needs to a man before starting to preach to him, if one is to be effective. The young people who took part in the riots are most basically those who are unaware of the presence of God in their lives. Persons become aware of God who dwells in them and to whom they are responsible, from their family life and from their Church or Temple. It is in the family guided and educated by the church, that hope for a decent future not only hereafter, but right here on earth is developed and nurtured. Hell hereafter is a place without hope of change or improvement. People who cannot envision change or improvement on earth are living in an earthly hell. They have no hope.

We, as a Commission, should, beyond housing and education, be able to pierce to the spiritual necessities of the rioters. We should be able to give them hope, and our most elementary appeal should be to the basic unit of all social living, the family, and to the God appointed guardian of family life, the Church and Temple. While we all as loyal Americans adhere to the idea of asparation of Church and State, it is national heresy, against the explicit letter of the Declaration of Independence, to hold for separation of God and State, which is the vogue on both federal and state levels.

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If the Human Rights Commission intends to issue a statement in the present difficulties, may I say that my interest above all others, would be in accenting the weakness in family life in the disadvantaged areas which is increasing, and in accenting the fact that religious leaders of all religions must make a self-sacrificing effort to reach and influence on a continued basis the people of these same areas.

Vincent P. Coburn
Vincent P. Coburn
Commissioner

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